

Dear Friends,

It has been fitting that the National Day of Remembrance fell in Passiontide, the later part of Lent when our thoughts turn more and more to the cross. It was moving to see acts of remembrance in churches across the Diocese and the poignant sight of so many candles ablaze in our Cathedral as we placed at the foot of the cross the pain of all who have suffered in this year of pandemic.

The journey of Passiontide and Holy Week takes us through pain to the joy and triumph of the Resurrection. It sounds like huge (and characteristic) imagination is being shown by our parishes around the Dioceses as you keep Holy Week within the restrictions. Thank you for your continuing dedication and faithfulness and all you are doing to speak the Gospel message of hope to our county. It is hard to think of a time when Christian ministry has been at one and the same time so challenging and so needed.

Weekly Message

The Weekly Message this week comes from Bishop Philip and takes the theme, 'God's Yes in Jesus.' It is available [here on the Diocesan YouTube channel](#).

Sunday Worship

A double offering for Palm Sunday:

- The Diocesan Sunday Service comes from Morecambe Parish Church and is led by the Rev Chris Krawiec. This will be livestreamed at 11am from the parish website which is [here](#). It can also be viewed later on the [Diocesan YouTube channel](#).
- In addition the National Church of England weekly service once again comes from our Diocese and will be led by the Rev Rebecca Aechtner and Canon Anderson Jeremiah, featuring liturgy from the Church of England and the Church of South India. It comes from St Paul's Scotforth and Hala with St Thomas's and the Priory playing a part. You can join in from 9am on Sunday morning [here on the Church of England webpage](#). The service will also be mirrored to [the Diocesan YouTube channel](#) from 11am and will remain on the channel as a recording after the live broadcast to watch later if you prefer.

Palm Sunday and Holy Week

Our observation of Holy Week and Easter seems especially important this year as we lay at the foot of the cross both a nation's grief and our hopes for the future. Please though do stick to the guidance very carefully and if you want it summed up in three easy sentences:

- Keep acts of worship short
- Avoid unnecessary movement (processions etc)
- Ensure that people gather and disperse promptly

A reminder that the Church of England guidance is [here](#). For those of you who celebrate the fullness of the traditional Holy Week rites there is helpful and more detailed guidance from the Roman Catholic bishops [here](#).

The Chrism Eucharist

Clergy should have received details of the Chrism Eucharists this year. Numbers are restricted but two out of the three are being livestreamed, so do encourage laypeople to join in:

- Lancaster Priory Tuesday March 30 at 10.30am can be viewed [here](#)
- Blackburn Cathedral Thursday April 1 at 10.30am
- St Anne's, St Anne's-on-Sea Sunday March 28 at 6pm (with Bishop Philip) can be viewed [here](#).

Ministry to Children and Young People

This is a really complicated area and it is not surprising that we have had quite so many enquiries at the Coronavirus email address. The current situation is as follows:

- From March 29 groups of no more than 15 children, young people and parents who are part of organised groups such as Sunday Schools and Mother and Toddler groups may gather for OUTDOOR events and activities. Children under 5 and organisers are not included in this number. Care should be taken to ensure that attendees maintain social distance. Such events must be on church property.
- From April 12 at the earliest parishes can re-commence children's ministry indoors. Again care should be taken with social distancing and face coverings are recommended.
- There is a really helpful and detailed document from the National Youth Agency which can be read [here](#). Please note especially the guidance from page 15 and onwards.

Updated Church of England Guidance

There has been an update to the Church of England's coronavirus guidance in two areas:

- Churches contributing to vaccination equity campaigns such as [Vaccinaid](#)
- Lateral flow tests

The updated guidance is [here](#).

Marriage Registration

Licensed clergy should have received a letter this week regarding training in the new rules on marriage registration. If you have not, please email the Bishop's Chaplain on chaplain@bishopofblackburn.org.uk

Coronavirus Email Address

If you have questions or problems please email: coronavirus@blackburn.anglican.org.

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Yours,

Coronavirus Task Group